

[11th December 1923]

The hon. the DEPUTY PRESIDENT :—" I think you have time enough."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" When are we to rise, Sir ? "

The hon. the DEPUTY PRESIDENT :—" I am entirely in the hands of the President. As there is still half an hour, the hon. Member had better proceed with his speech."

At this stage the hon. the President took the Chair.

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" May I ask a question, Mr. President, Sir ? I have been asked by the hon. the Deputy President to move the Resolution. I was just asking whether I shall have time to finish my speech. May I request you to be so good as to allow me to move the same to-morrow ? "

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" The Mover will certainly have his 30 minutes."

THE BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION.

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" Mr. President, Sir, the Resolution which I have the honour to move runs as follows :—

8. *That this Council recommends to the Government of Madras that it should withdraw from any further participation in the British Empire Exhibition of 1924 to be held in London.*

" I desire to say, Mr. President, that I move this Resolution with a full sense of my responsibility to this House, to my constituency, to my Presidency and to my country. I venture to say to this House that my Resolution is a very modest one and seeks to give expression in a very mild form to what I am sure will be acknowledged in every quarter of the House, to be the resentment, sorrow and humiliation which we Indians have been put to in the matter of the status and position of Indians in the Empire as a result of the decision of His Majesty's Government with regard to the Indians in Kenya. I am sure that my Resolution appeals to every section of political opinion in this House, whether we are Hindus or Muhammadans, Christians or depressed classes, liberals or progressives, independents or nationalists, and may I add in all humility non-Indians also who have made India their home and who therefore must feel that the honour and dignity of India is their honour and their dignity at least so long as they eat the salt of India ? I therefore hope that this House will give its unanimous vote in support of this Resolution. It is a very small attempt at the assertion of India's manhood, of India's self-respect and the expression of India's outraged dignity in the matter of her status in the Empire. I am very glad that such pronounced Ministerialists like Mr. Muniswami Nayudu of Chittoor and Mr. Krishnan Nayar before their elections had pledged themselves to the boycott of the British Empire Exhibition (hear, hear !). I therefore consider, Sir, that my task will be rendered easier and that the Resolution will receive support from every quarter of the House. I also consider that it is a matter of happy augury that just now the portfolio of the Minister who is in charge of the Resolution is in different hands. I do not say it for any other reasons. My hon. Friend the present Minister for Development can bring a fresh mind to bear on the question with the weight of the Kenya decision upon his mind and heart. My hon. Friend Sir K. V. Reddi can now speak free from the official trammels of his position which he held when he recommended the Resolution (laughter). Sir, I do hope that the Ministerial benches will remember that they are here not merely to translate to this House the wishes of the Government but also to translate to the House,

11th December 1923] [Mr. S. Satyamurti]

to the extent to which they can and they may, the wishes of the people. Thus, therefore, in this House who can deny that throughout India there is a strong feeling of resentment against this treatment and an anxiety that some expression ought to be given to this feeling in the country? Last but not least, Sir, I have the high authority of the Ministerial organ, the paper called *Justice* which wrote on the 19th of October 1923 thus:

'We agree, of course, that such proposals as the boycott of the Empire Exhibition and the boycott of British goods will be looked upon with positive disfavour by the British public and Parliament. All the same, it is no use forgetting the fact that it is the country's sense of utter impotence in any other manner to bring home to the British public its intense disgust and resentment over the Kenya betrayal that has given birth to such proposals. Every one realizes the economic hardships involved in a boycott of British goods as also the disadvantages from a commercial point of view arising from the boycott of the Empire Exhibition; but the racial and the political implications underlying the Kenya decisions are so revolting to our sense of national self-respect and honour that some of us are even prepared to undergo all the sacrifices involved if only we could thereby convey to the British public even a faint impression of the great indignation felt by one and all of us.'

"I do not think I can improve upon the temper of the language in which the feeling of the country has been expressed in that Ministerial organ. (Hear, hear.) Then, Sir, we have the authority of the great liberal school of politicians in this country whose mouthpiece, *The Servant of India*, in its issue of 6th December 1923—a paper which is so moderate that in its latest article it congratulates this House on continuing this Ministry in power (laughter)—says thus:

'It is generally agreed that India's non-participation in the British Empire Exhibition will, if feasible, give a striking expression to her resentment and humiliation at the Kenya decision. The Imperial authorities are setting much store by it and they will feel very keenly abstention on the part of India from such a sham. To it will be attracted people from all over the world, and if we are able to organize an effective boycott, we shall thereby bring home to influential men in all the countries the brand of inferiority which His Majesty's Government itself is seeking to put on Indians overseas.'

"The Right hon. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, a Member of the Privy Council of His Majesty the King-Emperor, on whom the Freedom of the City of London was conferred recently, and a man who, as every one knows him, knows, weighs his words most carefully, wrote very recently, that

'The dominions displeased at a comparatively trifling arrangement made by the authorities of the Exhibition threatened non-participation and carried the point. That is the way in which serious displeasure shows itself. If our Government'

and may I appeal to the Ministerial Government, I call them our Government as well—if our Government

'would take such a step, no Cabinet will think of treating it as they have now treated in the case of Kenya.'

"Then, Sir, we have the Resolution agreed to by all the political parties throughout India for the carrying of which Dr. Besant more than any one else is responsible—a Resolution signed by all the leaders of all political schools of India. It reads thus:

'That the British Empire Exhibition be boycotted by the Indian Government and by all agencies, official and private, as outraged India does not desire to be paraded before the world as a nation impotent to obtain redressal for the wrong which has just been inflicted on her, and, therefore, as a ground favourable for white exploitation, and as a place where cheap coloured labour can be obtained to enrich the Empire, which denies her equality of position therein.'

"Last but not least, Mr. President, His Excellency Lord Reading's Government says thus in a Resolution which they published on the 28th April 1923:

'At the same time, they (meaning the Government of India) cannot but record their deep regret that His Majesty's Government did not feel justified in giving greater effect to the

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

[11th December 1923]

recommendations made by them to the Secretary of State for India. They must reserve to themselves the opportunity of making such representations as may be necessary whenever in future a legitimate opportunity should present itself either as a result of experience gained or by change of events or otherwise'.

"I venture to submit to this House, Mr. President, that my Resolution, if approved by this House, will considerably strengthen the hands of His Excellency Lord Reading and his Government in pressing this point on the Home Government.

"I now refer to a speech made by my Friend, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, in Bombay, soon after his landing, where he mentioned that His Excellency Lord Reading's telegram to him communicating to him the resolution of the Bombay Corporation threatening the boycott of British goods considerably strengthened his hands. If this Council sends this Resolution to London and to all places where Imperial statesmen meet in conclave, there will be a stir and they will know that these Indians are not children to be played with, but men who have self-respect to assert and who know how to assert it. That is why I submit to this House that on every consideration this Resolution ought to be passed; and may I appeal to every section of this House that whatever our political differences with regard to other questions may be, where it is a question of Indian national self-respect and dignity, we shall all act according to the great maxim of Yudhishtara in Mahabharata :

‘ परस्पराविरोधेषु वयं पञ्चोत्तरं शतम् ॥

that is, where we do not differ, the Kauravas and Pandavas, we are not 100 against 5 but we are 105.' May I, therefore, suggest that all Members of this House must join together and say 'we 127 members are united in this matter and demand that India's outraged dignity should be retrieved'? I can advance, Mr. President, many grounds in support of my Resolution. I need mention only one, viz., the position of Indians in practically every part of the Empire. I have been out of this country and Mr. President, you have been, and many other Indians have been, and we know how humiliating it is to go out and to be identified as a coolie race. We who have produced the greatest giants in intellect, in character, we are branded as belonging to an inferior civilization because we are treated in our own Empire as helots. We know what it is and we are anxious that those who have not been out of India may also feel with us and take it from us that until India asserts her dignity, she will continue to be treated as a helot within the Empire. If there are any friends here who still suggest that whatever the indignity may be, whatever the outrage to self-respect may be, we should still take part in the British Imperial Exhibition for various reasons, I can only answer them, 'shall I bend low and in a bondman's key, with bated breath and whispering humbleness' and say this in the immortal words of Shakespeare: 'Fair, Sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last; you spurned me on such a day; another time you called me dog; and for these courtesies, I will take part in your exhibition.' I do hope that there is no Indian so barren of feeling, no Indian so thoughtless of his country's dignity as will say this. Sir, this exhibition is not a mere material exhibition. It is an assertion of the moral might of the British Empire and in saying this I have the very high authority of the Duke of Devonshire, who, while speaking at a luncheon given to the Prince of Wales, said that this exhibition is intended as an assertion of the moral might of the Empire. And I ask my friends who are Indians, who have no place in the

11th December 1923]

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

Empire, whether they are going to be present there or allow their countrymen to be present or allow their country's products to be there? I can find only one analogy and that in times of old, viz., when the Roman Emperors returned after their conquests they drove in the streets of Rome in their chariots of triumph with slaves tied to the chariot wheels. Even so we Indians as slaves and helots, can we go to the Wembley park and be shown as slaves and helots of the British Empire? I do not think that any Indian of this House who realizes that will agree to that position willingly. I know that an argument will be advanced—and I anticipate it—that this Council has already passed a Resolution on the 12th September 1922. But much water has flown even in the Coom since then. We find that conditions have radically changed and Kenya has intervened and from the answer the hon. the Development Minister gave this morning, we learn that only a sum of Rs. 50,000 and odd has been spent and we have got yet to spend two lakhs and odd. Therefore, I think, we can still save this amount and go no further and cause no further loss to the Government or to the people. Why I ask this House not to take this Kenya insult lying down is this: that it is a case not of England's standing by and allowing a self-governing dominion to have her own way; but, for His Majesty's Cabinet under whose direct control and Government Kenya is, to say 'we, who stood for equality in times of war, having fought in Holland, Flanders and France with Indians now that the war is over and we are secure, there is no more place for you except as slaves and you will be treated only as helots', is most insulting. I hope this will burn into the soul of every Indian here. I cannot put this better than in the words again of Mr. Sastri himself who says that

'It is a refinement of ingratitude and tyranny, the thought of which still lacerates my heart though it has been my constant companion night and day during some months. It may not be pleasing to Government, but is good for them to know that there is hardly an intelligent or patriotic Indian, who does not interpret and lament the Kenya settlement in the way I do.'

"I do not think I need detail to this House all the various details of the wrong inflicted upon my country; but I want to mention this point, viz., that this unnatural and unjust settlement is made all the more unnatural and all the more unjust because of the superior claims of Indians for fair treatment in that country. I am sure my hon. Friends must have read times without number the quotation from Mr. Winston Churchill's book on East Africa. I only want to read the last sentence of that quotation:

'Is it possible for any Government with a scrap of respect for honest dealing between man and man to embark on a policy of deliberately squeezing that native of India from regions in which he has established himself under every security of public faith?'

"Apart from past services during the war, Indians have fought on the fields of East Africa and the Empire and to-day the facts are that among the population of Kenya there are 9,651 European settlers according to the latest statistics available to me and 35,355 Asiatics of whom more than two-thirds are Indian and 2½ millions of Africans and the most significant fact of it all is that the Indian population has not increased for all these years but has decreased. For all these services what we have to-day is this: that with regard to franchise, we are given a communal franchise and we are told that for ever and ever we shall be racial inferiors in a British colony. We are excluded, secondly, from the highlands and we are told that we cannot acquire lands there. With regard to immigration, the matter is cleverly worded as all Government despatches usually are, but ultimately it comes to this, that all the classes to be discriminated against are Indians. Then all

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

[11th December 1923]

recommendations made by them to the Secretary of State for India. They must reserve to themselves the opportunity of making such representations as may be necessary whenever in future a legitimate opportunity should present itself either as a result of experience gained or by change of events or otherwise'.

"I venture to submit to this House, Mr. President, that my Resolution, if approved by this House, will considerably strengthen the hands of His Excellency Lord Reading and his Government in pressing this point on the Home Government.

"I now refer to a speech made by my Friend, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, in Bombay, soon after his landing, where he mentioned that His Excellency Lord Reading's telegram to him communicating to him the resolution of the Bombay Corporation threatening the boycott of British goods considerably strengthened his hands. If this Council sends this Resolution to London and to all places where Imperial statesmen meet in conclave, there will be a stir and they will know that these Indians are not children to be played with, but men who have self-respect to assert and who know how to assert it. That is why I submit to this House that on every consideration this Resolution ought to be passed; and may I appeal to every section of this House that whatever our political differences with regard to other questions may be, where it is a question of Indian national self-respect and dignity, we shall all act according to the great maxim of Yudhishtara in Mahabharata :

‘ परस्पराविरोधेषु वयं पञ्चोत्तरं शतम् ॥

that is, where we do not differ, the Kauravas and Pandavas, we are not 100 against 5 but we are 105.' May I, therefore, suggest that all Members of this House must join together and say 'we 127 members are united in this matter and demand that India's outraged dignity should be retrieved'? I can advance, Mr. President, many grounds in support of my Resolution. I need mention only one, viz., the position of Indians in practically every part of the Empire. I have been out of this country and Mr. President, you have been, and many other Indians have been, and we know how humiliating it is to go out and to be identified as a coolie race. We who have produced the greatest giants in intellect, in character, we are branded as belonging to an inferior civilization because we are treated in our own Empire as helots. We know what it is and we are anxious that those who have not been out of India may also feel with us and take it from us that until India asserts her dignity, she will continue to be treated as a helot within the Empire. If there are any friends here who still suggest that whatever the indignity may be, whatever the outrage to self-respect may be, we should still take part in the British Imperial Exhibition for various reasons, I can only answer them, 'shall I bend low and in a bondman's key, with bated breath and whispering humbleness' and say this in the immortal words of Shakespeare: 'Fair, Sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last; you spurned me on such a day; another time you called me dog; and for these courtesies, I will take part in your exhibition.' I do hope that there is no Indian so barren of feeling, no Indian so thoughtless of his country's dignity as will say this. Sir, this exhibition is not a mere material exhibition. It is an assertion of the moral might of the British Empire and in saying this I have the very high authority of the Duke of Devonshire, who, while speaking at a luncheon given to the Prince of Wales, said that this exhibition is intended as an assertion of the moral might of the Empire. And I ask my friends who are Indians, who have no place in the

11th December 1923]

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

part of the Whites. I do say with all respect, Mr. President, that Great Britain seems to have lost her secret of Government or even holding an Empire. This is but the thin end of the wedge. Let Kenya remain and soon there will be in all parts of the Empire secessions and threats and we who have brought forward this Resolution before this House are, I submit, in all humility, the real friends of the Empire, not hypocrites who go and tell the Britisher 'we are safe in your hands; give us more and more kicks and we will bear them all.' They are hypocrites who say that. But we are true friends. We say that there is a cancer in one part of the body and tell them 'your body will soon die withering under that growing cancer.'

4-45 p.m. "That is why, Sir, I submit that this Resolution is a humble but very necessary reminder to the Empire of the need of the Empire adjusting herself to the various conflicting racial claims within it. I know the argument will be advanced that we are likely to benefit by the Exhibition monetarily. I do not desire to go into this question now, but I may say that man does not live by bread alone. Even supposing that we are likely to get some money, is it worth having at the cost of national self-respect? And will the hon. the Minister for Development rise in his place and satisfy this House that these are the Exhibits which are going to find a new market owing to the Exhibition and these are roughly the millions of pounds or the crores of rupees which this Presidency is going to get as a result of its participation in the Exhibition? Sir, I know something of economics, of the laws of supply and demand. In these days of wireless communication I do not believe that Exhibitions really promote trade. Are our traders so insignificant that they do not know how to advertise their goods? Are our means of communication so antediluvian that our people do not know as to how we can introduce our products into the markets of the world? I do hope that this House will ask for facts as to what is going to be achieved by participating in this Exhibition.

"Then, Sir, it is said that our boycott of this Exhibition may not be effective. To that my answer is in the words of Mr. Sastri :

'Where one is in the grip of a big bully, patient and philosophic submission is no remedy. To hit out all with one's strength may not be effective either, but it is at least a vindication of one's manhood. The poet has said that the imprisoned cobra strikes not so much to punish the tormentor as out of wounded pride.'

"The hon. Sir K. V. Reddi Nayudu, when moving this Resolution, gave away the whole case when he said : 'It may be in our province, we may not be able to send many industrial products, but in ordinary raw products, I think, we can excel many other countries of the Empire', and what are those products? They are 'best cotton', whatever that phrase may mean, 'best skins and hides and oil seeds'. I ask, are these products to be exported to be manufactured and sent back to India? Sir, this has been the economic evil of India and the hon. the Minister for Development wants that India should be reduced to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water and that whatever they may reap should go to the profit, not of our own children, but to the other people of the Empire. The answer to this is given that, if you do not participate in this exhibition, you will be guilty of disloyalty. Sir, there is only one person on God's earth to whom we owe allegiance and that is to His Majesty the King-Emperor. I have no loyalty to Australia. I have no loyalty to East Africa. I do not see therefore what the considerations of loyalty are. And if they say 'it will be misunderstood by other people; if you do not take part in the exhibition you will be considered

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

[11th December 1923]

disloyal', my answer to that will be, Sir, I speak as an Indian. I am also made of the same flesh and blood as the Englishmen and I will ask any of you who understand human nature to note this quotation

'Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections passions, fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?' And 'if you wrong us', may I ask this House to say 'shall we not resent?'.

"That is the least we can say and we ought to say.

"The recent Imperial Conference about which so much has been quoted in the newspapers has practically done nothing. I do not seek to minimise in any manner the services rendered by our representative, Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, in England, but I may say that the Overseas Committee is going to be a costly farce. But if this Committee is appointed in the meantime we shall be strengthening their hands by this Resolution. There is no necessary conflict, if only we are able to carry this Resolution, between our loyalty to the King-Emperor and the position which has been assigned to us in the Empire and I appeal therefore to every Member of this House, Mr. President, not to view this question as a party question. It is by mere accident that I am moving this Resolution and I hope my Friends on the other side of the House will not take it amiss. If I venture to move this Resolution it is because I desire to vindicate the wounded pride of India. And when I ask you to vote for this Resolution unanimously, I am not asking you to foreswear your feeling for the Empire, but to say with me—and I am sure every Indian must say—'not that I love the Empire less but that I love India more.' If that is the feeling of every Indian, I hope this Resolution will be unanimously carried."

Rao Sahib U. RAMA RAO :—"Sir, I rise to second the Resolution which has been so ably and so eloquently moved by my Friend, the hon. Member for the University of Madras and after the lucid exposition of facts and the convincing arguments with which he has presented the case before the House, there is very little left for me to say.

"Whatever might be the merits or virtues of the British Empire Exhibition which had prompted us to submit meekly to the proposal to participate in it originally, they have, at any rate, ceased to exist now and the recent events and circumstances must warrant our entire withdrawal from any further participation therein. We were told that, on political grounds, the Exhibition would be a unifying factor and the warm hand of fellowship would be held out to the Indian, if he were to meet the other partners of the Empire on a common platform. But those who were optimistic enough to say so failed to notice the fact that a dire disease, Indo-Phobia, if I may call it, had overtaken the other partners of the Empire, the Colonials especially, and the disease being of an infectious character had spread like wildfire to every nook and corner of the Empire. The Colonials have already begun to exhibit the premonitory symptoms of that strange malady, viz., to scorn the Indians living in their territories and to segregate and shun them and despite the sweet pills and soothing balms of Sarmas, Sastris and Saprus, the disease shows no signs of abatement. Kenya is the worst sufferer at this moment and it is going mad at the thought of an Indian, at the sight of an Indian and at the very word 'Indian.' Every possible remedy has been tried—flowing oratory, sweet platitudes, kind persuasion, and even mild threats—by those compatriots of the Colonies from the Premier to the Viceroy, to no avail.

11th December 1923]

[Mr. U. Rama Rao]

The Colonial is adamant. Retaliation is *the, and the only*, cure and unless we Indians are prepared to administer a strong dose of 'Retaliation', there is absolutely no salvation for the oppressed millions of our countrymen in those Colonies. While such is the case, the so-called unity and solidarity of the British Empire aimed at by the Exhibition is only a mockery, and if we have any grit in us, we must refuse to take part any further in this Exhibition, which would be the first step in the process of retaliation.

"Coming next to the economic aspect of the question, we were assured by the powers that be, that the Exhibition would serve as the best medium for the mutual exchange of thoughts and ideas and the means of developing our own resources. Our raw products would attract the attention of the Empire and there would be greater demand for them which might induce a larger outturn—barring of course those human exhibits, I mean the dancing girls of Southern India, whom it was proposed to be included in the list of raw products of our Presidency for exhibition in London, and who, on better sense prevailing, were dropped out, but not until after vigorous protests from all quarters. Whatever arguments economists may adduce in defence of this Exhibition, I hold, from a common-sense point of view, the opinion that an industrially backward country like India can never profit by an exhibition of its raw products alone. There is already too much exploitation in the land by vested interests and this Exhibition would give room for greater exploitation which would help the industries of the other parts of the Empire, but would bring in economic distress to our own country. Exhibition of industries is one thing and that of raw products quite another. With no definite fiscal policy of our own, it will be hazardous to participate in an exhibition of this kind. To be forewarned is to be forearmed and let us therefore mend our ways before it is too late.

"Lastly comes the question of cost. The Exhibition entails the maintenance of a huge establishment here and in London, with heavy bills of freight, allowances and other contingencies, which will be a great burden to the poor tax-payer. Indian can ill-afford to meet this heavy expenditure and our Presidency especially is in a worse plight now with famine and distress knocking at our doors consequent on the havoc caused by the floods in South Kanara, Ganjam and Vizagapatam and the misery and starvation already experienced as a result of drought in parts such as Anantapur, Kurnool, Cuddapah and some other districts.

"We will not be true to our constituencies if we do not try to conserve all our resources to combat the impending famine and distress, and one of the means would be to economise expenditure in this direction. Enough unto the day is the evil thereof. I hope the hon. Members will realize the gravity of the situation and solidly vote for this motion unswayed by any considerations of policy or delicacy in the matter."

The House then adjourned (at 5 p.m.) to meet again at 11 a.m. the next day.

L. D. SWAMIKANNU,
Secretary to the Legislative Council.

[11th December 1923]

APPENDIX

[Vide page 246 supra]

G.O. No. 1054, Finance, dated 4th December 1923.

READ—the following papers:—

I

G.O. No. 366, Finance, dated 1st April 1921.

ABSTRACT.—Resolution of the Legislative Council for the formation of a Finance Committee accepted by Government.

II

G.O. No. 400, Finance, dated 1st May 1922.

ABSTRACT.—Committees—Public Accounts and Finance—Constitution of —1922-23.

Order—No. 1054, Finance, dated 4th December 1923.

The Standing Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for the remainder of the year 1923-24 will be constituted as follows:—

Nominated by His Excellency the Governor.

- (1) Hon. Sir Charles Todhunter, K.C.S.I., I.C.S. (Chairman).
- (2) R. W. Davies, Esq., I.C.S., M.L.C.
- (3) M.R.Ry. Rai Bahadur T. M. Narasimhacharlu Garu, M.L.C.

Elected by the Non-official Members of the Council.

- (4) M.R.Ry. A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar Avargal, M.L.C.
- (5) Janab Muhammad Yahya Ali Sahib Bahadur, M.L.C.
- (6) M.R.Ry. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar Avargal, M.L.C.
- (7) C. Nicholson, Esq., M.L.C.
- (8) Rai Bahadur Sir K. V. Reddi Nayudu, Kt., M.L.C.
- (9) Dr. P. Subbarayan, M.L.C.

(By order of the Governor in Council)

R. W. DAVIES,
Secretary to Government.

To all Departments of the Secretariat.
 „ the Accountant-General.
 „ all Secretaries of Departments.
 „ all Members of the Finance Committee.
 „ the Secretary, Legislative Council (for communication to
 Members of the Legislative Council).